

Landslide Part 2: Moral Relativism

Review: We are talking about your worldview—the way you make decisions, the way you see the world, like a pair of glasses you put on.

Last week was about Universalism/Religious pluralism: An acceptance of the concept that two or more religions with mutually exclusive truth claims are equally valid. This may be considered a form of either toleration (a concept that arose as a result of the European wars of religion) or moral relativism.

John 14:5–7 (NLT) ⁵“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

The problem revealed in the garden:

A Christian Worldview versus Syncretism:

- Remember Jesus wants us to build our lives on Him. (Matthew 7:24-27)
-

This week: Moral Relativism

We are not talking about subjective things. We are talking about objective, universal moral and spiritual truths.

- **Moral Relativism** is the view that *moral judgments* are true or false only relative to some particular standpoint (for instance, that of a culture or a historical period) and that no standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others.
 - There is no universal, objective truth according to relativism; rather each point of view has its own truth.
 - The correspondence definition of truth: the view that truth is that which corresponds to fact or reality.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

The ways people view truth can lead to serious problems.

- Some say there is no absolute, objective moral or spiritual truth—that there is no objective truth for all people for all times.
 - Some say, “I trust my feelings.”
 - Some trust what we see with our eyes or experience ourselves .
 - We accept what the culture tells us is true. We accept whatever is most popular now.
-

Real problems with relative truth:

- It doesn’t work. A house divided can’t stand. Leads to anarchy.
- It is not consistent with the world we see.
- It’s illogical.
- Most importantly, it’s not biblical! It’s not consistent with what our Lord says.

John 8:42–47 2 Timothy 2:24–26 Colossians 2:6–11

Back to our key verse: John 14:6

- “He is **the** way” This deals with universalism/pluralism. If Jesus says there is multiple ways, then fine, but He doesn’t say that.,
- The early Christians died because they didn’t believe there was more than one way.
- He is the truth. He is the creator, the designer, the one who sees every aspect (both spiritual and physical).

Matthew 7:13–14 (NIV) ¹³Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Jesus made it clear that He is the authority on truth, and He tells us to teach His commands.

- **Notice Jesus is Lord, He is the authority.**
- **Notice Jesus tells us His commands, and they are both understandable and teachable.**

Matthew 28:18–20 (NIV) ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

- **His Word is truth. It is the standard by which God operates. His judgements are just.**

John 17:15–17 (NIV) ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 12:47–50

- **His commands don’t change.**

Matthew 5:17–20

Matthew 24:35 (NIV) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- **His words, the truth, lead to life.**

John 8:31–32 (NIV) ³¹To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

- **Our part is to accept His authority, have faith, and surrender.**

Romans 1:5 (NIV) Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake.

1 Peter 3:15–17 (NIV) ¹⁵But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV) Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Discussion questions for home, or Life Group:

1. Describe what might happen if everyone did what he or she personally determined was right. (Maybe imagine what it would be like to build a house with that approach.)
2. Think about how you determine what is right and wrong or where your understanding of morals and values has come from. Share what you discover.
3. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Psalm 25:1-15. How do you seek Jesus to instruct you in what is true?
4. When have you had to change what you believe to align to what God’s word said? Describe what that was like.
5. In your world, what can make it challenging to hold the belief that there are absolute moral truths?
6. What is God showing you about your own belief system? Talk about what your next step is in following Jesus.